

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 02059 101807Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

----- 096103

R 101750Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8108

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 02059

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UK, PINT

SUBJECT: EVE OF THE SECOND BALLOT

REF: LONDON 1724

SUMMARY: ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND BALLOT FOR TORY PARTY LEADERSHIP, MARGARET THATCHER APPEARS TO BE LEADING BUT MAY FALL SHORT OF REQUIRED 139 VOTES. WHITELAW IS HER STRONGEST CHALLENGER AND RESULT MAY BE CLOSE. PRIOR, HOWE, AND PEYTON WILL FINISH FAR BACK, BUT RACE SHOULD BE USEFUL IN GIVING FIRST TWO AT LEAST EXPERIENCE FOR ANOTHER TRY IN THE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH CIRCUMSTANCES ARE QUITE DIFFERENT, DISAPPEARANCE OF HEATH FROM THE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN AS MUCH A GIFT TO THE MEDIA AS WAS THE CHRISTMAS-TIME DISAPPEARANCE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 02059 101807Z

OF LABOR MP STONEHOUSE, AND FOR THIS, COLUMNISTS AND

CARTOONISTS ARE INDEBTED TO LORD HOME AND HIS COMMITTEE. CONSERVATIVES GENERALLY ARE DEPLORING THE "CIRCUS" ATMOSPHERE WHICH HAS DEVELOPED, AND EVEN CANDIDATES ARE PROPOSING THAT NEW AND BETTER PROCEDURES BE DEvised. SOME EVEN CALL FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE FAMED "MAGIC CIRCLE," THE METHOD BY WHICH THE CONSERVATIVE LEADER TRADITIONALLY "EMERGED."

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION HAS DIRECTED PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE CONSERVATIVES, GIVEN THEM SCADS OF PUBLICITY, AND INTRODUCED AN ELEMENT OF SOUL-SEARCHING WITHIN THE PARTY WHICH HAS VITALIZED THE PARTY AND MADE IT FEEL IMPORTANT AGAIN. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CONTROVERSY HAS ALSO LED TO BACKBITING AND RECRIMINATION WHICH IS NOT HELPFUL AND THE ELECTION WILL LEAVE SCARS, NOT ONLY ON HEATH AND HEATH-SUPPORTERS. THERE IS AN ATMOSPHERE OF APPREHENSION AT PARTY HEADQUARTERS WHICH IS DAMAGING; HEADQUARTERS OFFICIALS ASSUME, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THAT THERE WILL BE A "CLEAN-OUT" OF THE STAFF, REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS, AND SOME ARE ALREADY ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR ESCAPE HATCHES.

3. OF THE CANDIDATES, THATCHER SEEMS TO BE DOING BEST ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND BALLOT. HER SUPPORTERS ARE INDICATING QUIET CONFIDENCE AT A LEVEL SOMEWHAT ABOVE THE "CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM" THEY EXPRESSED AFTER THE FIRST BALLOT. HER WEEK-END APPEARANCE AT THE YOUNG CONSERVATIVE CONFERENCE IN EASTBOURNE HAD EVERY ASPECT OF A QUEENLY TRIUMPH AND SHE HAS BENEFITED GREATLY FROM THE ATTENTION OF THE MEDIA. SHE HAS FURTHERMORE BEEN SHREWD IN EXPLOITING IT. BUT WHETHER SHE YET HAS ENOUGH ASSURED VOTES (139) TO WIN ON THE SECOND BALLOT IS NOT CLEAR. SHE IS INHERITING AT LEAST SOME OF THE HEATH VOTERS BUT WILL ALSO LOSE THE VOTES OF THOSE WHO SUPPORTED HER ON THE FIRST BALLOT MAINLY TO DUMP HEATH.

4. WHITELAW'S CAMPAIGN HAS NOT CAUGHT FIRE WITH THE PUBLIC, THOUGH HE MAY BE DOING SOMEWHAT BETTER IN THE CORRIDORS OF PARLIAMENT WHERE SOME MPS ARE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF A THATCHER VICTORY.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 02059 101807Z

HOWEVER, WHITELAW SEEMS ASSURED ONLY OF SECOND PLACE ON THE SECOND BALLOT AND WILL LIKELY BE CONTENT IF HE GETS ENOUGH VOTES TO DENY THATCHER VICTORY AND GO INTO A THIRD BALLOT, WHERE THE TRANSFERABLE PREFERENCE VOTE WILL CONFIRM HIM AS LEADER (I.E., EVERYBODY'S SECOND CHOICE).

5. WHILE THE CHANCES OF PRIOR, HOWE AND PEYTON ARE MINIMAL, THE SPOILERS' ROLE IS THEIRS. IF THEY PULL ENOUGH

VOTES, THEY CAN FORCE THE RACE TO A THIRD AND FINAL
BALLOT.

SPIERS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY ELECTIONS, ELECTION FORECASTS, PARTY LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON02059
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750048-0577
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750257/aaaabznu.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LONDON 1724
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 APR 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <15 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVE OF THE SECOND BALLOT
TAGS: PINT, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006